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No. 329

THE LOVE PIRATE

A Farce in One Act

BY
GEORGE FORD

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THE LOVE PIRATE.

Or TWO TOO MUCH

TIME:—*The present. Evening.*

SCENE:—*Ordinary upper class living room. Home-like and in good taste. Stairs leading up stairs from reception room can be seen at back. The only important props are a piano which SMYTH can hide behind and look over; and a telephone.*

CHARACTERS.

HENRY SMYTH..*Young, good-looking, dry, semi silly-ass type. Must play in the usual manner of farce distraction and yet inspire a certain sympathy.*

MR. MASON..*Fat, fiery, yet unctuous and bubbling*

FANNY MASON.....*His daughter*

MOLLY PARSONS.....*Friend of FANNY*

POLLY TRASK.....*Friend of FANNY*

MR. SNOWMAN.....*Minister*

THE LOVE PIRATE

(At rise of curtain MR. MASON is discovered reading by lamp at fireplace.)

Sound of auto stopping.

Door bell rings.

MR. MASON waits for someone to go to door.

Bell rings again.

MR. MASON puts down book and goes around to front door. The door is heard to open and MASON is heard speaking—continuing first speech until it brings him down center.

MASON. Why, hello, Henry. Glad to see you. Come in. We didn't expect you back from your business trip so soon. Put your things on the rack there.

(HENRY comes down center opposite MASON but does not take off his coat and keeps his hat in his hand throughout.)

HENRY. *(Speaking rapidly)* Mr. Mason, I love your daughter.

MASON. *(Adopting HENRY'S quick tone and manner)* I know it.

HENRY. I want to marry her.

MASON. You have my consent.

HENRY. But——

MASON. Eh?

HENRY. But I have a confession.

MASON. A what?

HENRY. A confession of weakness, of crime. I'm desperate. I came to this house to-night to ask your daughter to elope with me to escape from it all.

MASON. What! A weakling and a criminal to elope with my daughter to escape from—— Now, understand one thing, sir, my daughter will marry a gentleman and marry him as a lady should. No elopement for my daughter! Never. There must be an engagement, preparation, announcements, parties, presents, church—all that goes with a real marriage. Why, I'd skin the man alive that tried to elope with my daughter.

HENRY. Mr. Mason—listen—please listen—When I started on that last business trip of two weeks, the first town I made was Poughkeepsie—Oh, how I hate the name of that town—Poughkeepsie—I called on a girl. I have known her for sometime. Her name is Molly. I took her to dine at the Hotel Poughkeepsie. Oh! We had turkey—I held up the wish bone to her—like this—and said. "Make a wish." She said "I can't"—"Very well then," said I, "I'll wish for you"—And Mr. Mason, she said "Oh, never mind the old wish bone, you can have me." Well, the very next minute she was in my arms telling me how much she loved me.

MASON. My, my, my, my——

HENRY. But—But—*dramatically*. The worst is yet to come.

MASON. *Dazed*—Yet to come.

HENRY. Yes. I know another girl in Poughkeepsie—Oh, that word—a girl named Polly.

MASON. Polly——

HENRY. Yes. I was walking down the main street with her the next morning—in broad daylight mind you—we passed a jeweler's shop. There was a tray of engagement rings in the window. I looked

at them and said: "They are very beautiful but (*dolefully*) So-o-o-o expensive.

MASON. Just like that, eh? So-o-o-o expensive.

HENRY. Yes. So-o-o-o expensive. You see I was thinking of my slip with Molly the night before. I said—So-o-o-o expensive and what do you think Polly said?

MASON. What did Polly say?

HENRY. She said: "Oh, you poor dear boy. I understand perfectly. Come right on home and give me a petting."

MASON. Did you give her a petting?

HENRY. Well, I had to give her a petting or give her a diamond ring. What do you think I did? That was just two weeks ago, Mr. Mason, and they have both been writing me silly, sentimental, slushy, sticky letters ever since,—two letters a day from Poughkeepsie—oh, that word. And what's more Mr. Mason, they're looking at apartments—and furniture like that, and crockery like that, and rugs like that, and mantel clocks like that and red home-like reading lamps like that—and what's more Mr. Mason, they're visiting lingerie shops—and what's more Mr. Mason, they're both embroidering nightgowns!

MASON. Dear, dear. A nightgown is a very serious affair.

HENRY. Ruinous! Deadly! Do you know how long it takes to embroider a nightgown?

MASON. No.

HENRY. Well, I do. I've studied it and asked questions. It takes at the most generous calculation two weeks—two miserable fleeting weeks. Mr. Mason the enemy are upon us. Molly and Polly of Poughkeepsie—Oh—are closing in.

MASON. Molly and Polly of Poughkeepsie? What are their last names?

HENRY. Molly Parsons and Polly Trask.

MASON. Ha, ha, ha, ha.

HENRY. What's the matter?

MASON. Ha, ha, ha, ha. Why Fanny knows them both. Went to school with them.

HENRY. Eh?

MASON. And what's more, Henry, they both came down to New York last night. Ha, ha.

HENRY. Eh?

MASON. Yes, and what's more, Henry, they are both visiting Fanny here to-night! Ha, ha, ha——

HENRY. Good-night. (*He starts for front door*)

MASON. (*Holding him*) No, you can't do that. You'll meet Molly, she just stepped out to the corner before you came. She's probably on the front porch now.

HENRY. I'll go out the back way.

MASON. (*Holding him*) You can't. Polly's in the back garden.

HENRY. (*Starting toward stairs*) I'll go over the roofs.

MASON. (*Still holding him*) No you don't—Now wait. I know a way out.

HENRY. Any way "out."

MASON. I mean a way out of your scrape. I understand women. I have had a wife and a daughter.

HENRY. That's what I want. Not two wives, or three wives or ten wives, or fifty wives, but A wife and your daughter.

MASON. Well—apartments and furniture and lingerie and nightgowns finished or unfinished, these girls do not want to marry you right now. They're all like my daughter. They don't marry half-cooked or elope any more. They want the engagement, announcements, presents, church, fur and feathers, I spoke of. Do you get me?

HENRY. No I don't.

MASON. Well—listen. You get to Molly and Polly—now—yes—right away. Say you're desperate with pangs of love. Say you must elope immediately.

HENRY. What?

MASON. Yes—like this—“Molly—and then Polly as the case may be—I love you. I love you devotedly, madly, passionately, I cannot work without you, I cannot eat without you, I cannot live without you another hour. I am crazed with tenderness, with longing, with love with passion. You must marry me this night—you must. Elope! Meet me at the garage in fifteen minutes and we will fly together—will you? I ask you, will you?” See? They of course, refuse. You get peeved, angry, insulted, say they don’t truly love you and break the engagement.

HENRY. Again, dear heart, good-night.

MASON. (*Holding him back*) No, now, do as I say and you’ll slip through like an eel. I’ll send Molly in now and when she’s gone you can finish with Polly. Sit there now, just a minute. (*Exit. HENRY sits in chair directed—He starts to rehearse his proposal gives it up and sits again still more dejected*)

(*Enter MOLLY.*)

MOLLY. Henry—dear Henry. (*She runs to him and throws herself in his arms*) What a surprise.

HENRY. (*Dazed but getting down to business in a rapid-fire toneless manner*) Molly, I love you—I love you devotedly, madly, passionately. I cannot work without you. I cannot eat without you, I cannot feel, see, taste, smell, hear—without you. I cannot live without you another hour.

MOLLY. Are you crazy?

HENRY. Eh?

MOLLY. Are you crazy?

HENRY. Oh,—yes—crazed with tenderness, with longing, with love, with passion. You must marry me this night, you must! Elope! Meet me at the garage in fifteen minutes and we will fly together. Will you—now I ask you—will you?

MOLLY. Why now dear sweet boy. You know I will.

HENRY. What?

MOLLY. Yes. It won't take me fifteen minutes to get ready. I haven't unpacked my things yet. I'll be there, dearie. (*She runs toward and up stairs throwing kisses*) Oh, I'm so happy. (*Throws kisses until she is off then turns in despair and runs right into POLLY who enters*)

HENRY. (*Startled and bewildered*) Polly, I love you, I love you devotedly, madly, passionately, I cannot work without you, I cannot eat without you, I cannot sleep without——

POLLY. What!

HENRY. I mean I cannot live without you another hour.

POLLY. Are you crazy?

HENRY. Yes, are you?

POLLY. No.

HENRY. Then I might as well go through with it. Yes, crazed with tenderness, with longing, with love, with passion. You must marry me this very night—you must. Meet me at the garage in fifteen—I mean in ten minutes and we will fly together. Will you? Now I ask you, will you?

POLLY. (*In a loud, vulgar voice*) Yes. (*Throws herself into his arms. Recovering*) It won't take me ten minutes. I'll sneak to my room and get ready. (*Going off*) Oh, so romantic. I'm so happy.

(HENRY repeats same business as at exit of MOLLY and at finish runs into FANNY who enters.)

FANNY. Why, Henry. (*They kiss*)

HENRY. (*This time in a weepy, sentimental, pitiable tone*) Fanny, I love you, I love you devotedly, madly, passionately. I cannot work without you, I cannot think without you, I cannot eat with-

out you, I cannot live another hour without you.

FANNY. Are you crazy?

HENRY. Yes, crazed with tenderness, with longing, with love, with passion. You must marry me this night—you must. Elope! Please, oh, please meet me at the garage in fifteen—in five minutes and we will fly together. Will you? Now I ask you, will you?

FANNY. (*Decidedly*) No.

HENRY. Eh?

FANNY. No. I'm afraid of daddy.

HENRY. Why, it's his idea. He fixed it—cooked it up. He told me to do it.

FANNY. Did he?

HENRY. Yes. Meet me at the garage in five—in three minutes and we'll fly together.

FANNY. Daddy advised secrecy and an elopement?

HENRY. Yes. To the garage in two minutes.

FANNY. Why I can't. I have two friends here—from Poughkeepsie—but, dear, that isn't necessary. The minister lives right across the street. I'll run over to see him first. You stay here to speak to daddy again to be sure. Then we'll slip over and get married and come back—and—(*running off*)—we'll all have a high old time here to-night. (*Exit*)

HENRY. Oh, yes, we'll all have a high old time here to-night. (*He starts toward front door, hears someone coming and hides behind baby grand piano. He can straighten up and be seen by audience but not by characters during following scenes*)

(MOLLY and POLLY enter by stairs and R. C. respectively wearing auto coats and carrying grips. They meet in center stage.)

MOLLY and POLLY. (*Together*) Why, where are you going?

MOLLY and POLLY. You won't tell any one?

MOLLY and POLLY. (*Surprised*) I'm going to elope.

MOLLY and POLLY (*Getting wise*) With whom?

MOLLY and POLLY. Henry Smyth.

MOLLY and POLLY. Oh! (*Cry*)

(*Enter MR. MASON.*)

MASON. (*Taking in the situation, as he thinks, in a glance and chuckling to himself during following scene*) Well, girls, you seem to be in trouble. All dressed up—satchels too—you're not going to leave us? (*Both girls start to bawl on his shoulders*)

MOLLY. He said he loved us devotedly, madly, passionately. He would not work without us, he could not eat without us, he could not live without us—another hour.

POLLY. We were to fly with him at once, elope! Meet him at the garage in ten minutes.

MASON. My, what cold-hearted devil could think of such things?

MOLLY. We're going to leave this horrid house at once.

POLLY. We're going on the next train.

MASON. I'll take you to the subway. (*Girls continue to bawl*)

(*Telephone rings. MASON goes to telephone.*)

MASON. (*Speaking over telephone*) Yes, Fanny. This is daddy—Tell Henry he's not at home. Henry's not here. I think he's left the house. Where are you?—What are you doing at Dr. Snowman's—No, I don't know—I fixed it—I cooked it up—What are you talking about—(*In changed tone*) You come right on over to this house, Miss, as fast your legs can carry you. Understand? (*He hangs up receiver*) He's planning to run away with my daughter.

MOLLY. The scoundrel!

POLLY. The villain!

MASON. The skunk!

MOLLY. Wait until I see him!

POLLY. Wait until I talk to him!

MASON. Wait until I lay hands on him!

HENRY. Yes—wait.

(The girls bawl again on MASON'S shoulders.

HENRY starts to sneak out, sees FANNY coming and hides again. FANNY enters running.)

MASON. So, Miss, so—so!

MOLLY. Oh, Fanny, how could you?

POLLY. Yes, Fanny, how could you?

HENRY. *(Aside)* Same way you both could.

FANNY. What's the matter?

MASON. Matter! Look, Miss, look upon two wrecked lives—two abandoned women.

MOLLY and POLLY. What!

MASON. Look upon the tender, trusting womanhood—wantonly stained by the diabolical scheming of that love-pirate, that arch-fiend, that sentimental madman who plans three elopements with three children in fifteen minutes.

FANNY. Who?

MOLLY and POLLY. Henry Smyth.

HENRY. *(Aside)* No, not me—him.

MOLLY. The simpleton.

POLLY. The idiot.

MASON. The sap-head.

FANNY. *(Pertly)* He's no such thing. He's the dearest, sweetest boy that ever lived.

HENRY. *(Aside)* Oh, you darling.

MINISTER. *(Entering)* Was any one inquiring for me?

MASON, MOLLY and POLLY. No.

FANNY and HENRY. Yes.

(MOLLY and POLLY start crying again. This time on the MINISTER'S shoulders. FANNY tries to calm MASON. While all this storm is going on, HENRY creeps under the piano and tries to sneak out. MASON sees him, catches him and brings him down stage.)

MASON. So, sir, so, so. You're the man who tries to elope with three women, my daughter among them, all in one evening.

HENRY. (*Aroused*) So, sir, so—so—you're the man who put me up to it! Didn't I tell you I loved your daughter?

MASON. Yes, but——

HENRY. And didn't you give me your consent to marry her?

MASON. Yes, but——

HENRY. And didn't you tell me I could escape the effects of a mistaken opinion on the part of these two young women by proposing and immediate elopement?

MASON. Yes, but——

HENRY. And when they refused I was to break the engagements?

MOLLY and POLLY. (*To MASON*) Oh, you brute. (*Both cry again on MINISTER'S shoulders*)

MASON. Yes, but——

HENRY. And haven't I suffered behind that piano—hearing myself unjustly reviled for ten minutes.

FANNY. (*Flinging herself in HENRY'S arms*) Oh, Henry I understand. You dear boy. I'll marry you any time.

MASON. No, you won't. You can't have my child. I'm going to skin you alive.

MINISTER. Good gracious. I must go. (*He drops both ladies into MASON'S arms*) This is a mad house. (*He exits quickly*)

MASON. See here, now—see here——

HENRY. (*To FANNY*) Darling we'll be at the garage in one minute.

MASON. Hey—you—see here now—(*HENRY and FANNY start toward front door*) Where are you going?

HENRY. (*Putting on hat and picking up both grips*) To Poughkeepsie. Oh, how I love that word. (*Exit with FANNY*)

(*At the word Poughkeepsie both MOLLY and POLLY scream and fall forward. MASON facing audience and holding one under each arm—their feet and heads toward floor. He swings them around and starts up-stage.*)

MASON. Say—you—here. (*He swings around and starts down-stage*) Hey—Hey—somebody—anybody. (*Then in a resigned, helpless voice*) Oh—Lord!

QUICK CURTAIN.

Incidental music can be played before the rise and fall of curtain.

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